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## Hand-Spinning v. Mill-Spinning

# HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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## THOU TOO BIHAR!

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

It is a grim irony of fate that Bihar, which did so well during the golden days of Satyagraha, should now disgrace itself by criminal lawlessness. If the news published is authentic, chain-pulling and stopping trains without cause has become a common occurrence in Bihar with the result that the trains rarely run to time. Passengers consider it superfluous to buy tickets for train journeys. Under a national government, they argue, payment should be unnecessary. *Jai Hind* is regarded as a cry for loot and murder.

I do not know what truth there is in these charges which are as wild as they well can be. I know some parts of Bihar where persons do not distinguish between things lawful and unlawful. I have even heard the argument that I am largely responsible for the prevailing lawlessness, not only in Bihar, but throughout India. I need hardly say that it is a thoughtless charge. The lawlessness, if it can be so described, that I have advocated is like prescribing wholesome and necessary food for the body. Behind my 'lawlessness' there is discipline, construction and well-being of society. It is an effective protest against unjust and injurious law or act. It can never take the form of selfish evasion of a duty. It is a duty never to pull the alarm chain except in well-defined and rare emergencies and never to travel without due payment for the class in which we travel. Loot, arson and murder have never been part of my programme of so-called lawlessness. The answer to the argument that whilst my programme may be good enough for a select few, it can never be for the masses, lies in the question whether I am expected to starve the masses of good food for fear of their taking bad or poisonous food.

I have purposely entered upon what appears to be a personal note, not at all in self-defence, but in order to drive the point home that what is said to be going on in Bihar is administration of rank poison. That way lies not self-rule but licentiousness, not independence but helpless dependence, not life but suicide. Is Bihar of Brijkishoreprasad and Rajendraprasad that I have known and lived in come to the pass described above? Let the public workers of Bihar not permit the senseless destruction of the fair work of construction done with patient toil. Bihar, beware!

New Delhi, 29-9-'46

## SOME POSERS

The Secretaries of the National Congress took advantage of the recent A. I. C. C. session to arrange a meeting of the presidents and secretaries of the various Provincial Congress Committees with Gandhiji. The meeting was held in the building of the D. A. V. School, Delhi. Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani. Instead of delivering an address he invited questions. The following are the more important questions and their replies:

*Q.* Wrangling and corrupt practices have today become a common feature of our elections. What should be the attitude of Congressmen with regard to the elections?

*A.* What you say only shows that we seek leadership instead of being servants of the nation. There can be no room for wrangles, when service is the ideal. Congressmen should realize that only a few can become leaders, the goal for all Congressmen to set before themselves can only be to qualify as true servants of the nation. An institution that suffers from a plethora of leaders is surely in a bad way. For instance, if every Khudai Khidmatgar aspired to become the chief, it would make the life of Badshah Khan hell besides disrupting the Khudai Khidmatgar organization itself.

If Congressmen lived up to the creed which they professed, viz. the attainment of Swaraj through truthful and non-violent means, paraphrased in the Congress constitution by the words "peaceful and legitimate", there should be no wrangling and no corruption. The existence of election wrangles and irregular practices is thus only a proof that the Congress policy of "attainment of Swaraj through 'peaceful and legitimate' means" is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. I have, therefore, suggested that it should be dropped in the amended constitution that is to come into being. Pending the setting up of the new constitution I have suggested a plan of work which does away with further elections for the time being and which requires all Congressmen to be active servants. If it is adopted it should cut across all our difficulties and troubles.

*Q.* Very few minorities' representatives have been returned at the elections. What remedy do you suggest?

*A.* Minorities being a minority, their representation in the Congress organization will naturally be proportionately less. If they feel dissatisfied, they can keep out of the Congress without ceasing

to be Congressmen as I have done. It is my claim that I am not less a Congressman but more by reason of my ceasing to be even a four-anna member of the Congress. At Faizpur Congress the question was raised by Mrs. Anasuyabai Kale at a gathering at which I was present. On interrogation it was found that the number of those who were four-anna members was very small. But in reply to the question as to how many in the gathering were not four-anna members, a forest of hands went up. These are real Congressmen seeking no reward but seeking ever to serve it. Bereft of them it would dwindle into a parlour show. The only worthy aim of a Congressman can be to belong wholly to the Congress, never to capture and dominate the Congress. If everybody took up the correct attitude there would be no minorities and majorities. To try to 'capture' the Congress would be to kill the Congress. And a Congressman who is worthy of his salt would die rather than be guilty of the murder.

*Q.* The policy of the Interim Government is to keep down the prices of food grains. Would it not adversely affect the production of food grains?

*A.* I want to reduce the prices of food grains still further. I claim to be a peasant myself and I know that only a fraction of the price paid by the consumer actually reaches the grower of food. It should be the business of the Interim Government to see that the tiller of the soil gets full value of his produce and that every pie paid by the consumer reaches the peasant's pocket or else it should get out. The Interim Government can never be guilty of wishing to provide cheap grains to the consumer at the expense of the grower of food. The trouble with the cultivator is not low prices but the middleman.

Even in Khadi production I set the target of 8 as. a day for the spinners. We actually reached the rate of 4 as. in spite of the objection that dear Khadi would spell the ruin of Khadi production That illustrates my attitude towards the producer. I would eliminate the middleman altogether. It is he who today sponges upon the agriculturist. Otherwise, there is no reason why the peasant should starve. At the same time a peasant who profiteers or exploits the black market belies his calling. He is no less an exploiter than the Zamindar.

*Q.* The growth of parties in the Congress is having a very adverse effect on the Congress organization. What is the remedy?

*A.* There can be only one party in the Congress, i. e. that of Congressmen and no other. That is not to say that there is no room in the Congress for individuals or groups holding different opinions. I do not believe in dead uniformity. "All men are born equal and free" is not Nature's law in the literal sense. All men are not born equal in intellect, for instance, but the doctrine of equality will be vindicated if those who have superior intellect will use it not for self-advancement at the expense of others, but for the service of those who are less favoured in that respect than they. Today there are all sorts in the Congress. That is why I have suggested the removal of the words "peaceful and legitimate" from the Congress objective. That need not mean abandonment of truth and non-violence by Congressmen. The object is only to purge out hypocrisy. It jars. Let those who believe in the doctrine of the sword openly avow it. To take the name of non-violence when there is sword in your heart, is not only hypocritical and dishonest but cowardly. Our non-violence vis-a-vis the British Government has been the non-violence of the weak. Otherwise, why should there be all these wrangles among ourselves? We try to justify the disorganization and chaos in our midst by pointing to the example of "squatters" in England, forgetting that blind imitation would not help us. There is nothing more demoralizing than fake non-violence of the weak and impotent. If we had the requisite non-violence in us, our public life would be characterized by utmost toleration. There will then be room for as many parties as there are opinions. Differences of opinion would be an indication of healthy independence of mind which is the law of life, not party intrigues and party strife. The latter are incompatible with independence.

*Q.* How should the Hindu-Muslim question be tackled?

*A.* I must own defeat on that point. I know that mine is today a voice in the wilderness and yet I claim that mine is the only practicable solution. I can never subscribe to the view that because certain members of a particular community have indulged in inhuman acts, therefore the whole community may be condemned outright and put beyond the pale. The Muslim League may call Hindus names and declare India to be *Dar-ul-Harb*, where the law of *jehad* operates and all Muslims who co-operate with the Congress as Quislings fit only to be exterminated. But we must not cease to aspire, in spite of this wild talk, to befriend all Mussalmans and hold them fast as prisoners of our love. It would be a present possibility if Hindus in their lakhs offered themselves to be cut to pieces without retaliation or anger in their hearts. Non-violence is today rightly laughed out of court as Utopian. Nevertheless, I maintain that it is the only way to keep Hinduism alive and India undivided. The history of the Congress non-violence for the last twentyfive years has taught us nothing, if it has not taught us that.

*Q.* How can we counteract the activities of the Communists, who are openly opposing the Congress?

*A.* The principle which I have laid down vis-a-vis the Hindu-Muslim question also holds good in respect of the Communists. By "Muslim" I mean the Muslim League. For, not all the Muslims are Muslim Leaguers. The Muslim Leaguers have today raised the slogan that ten crores of Indian Muslims are in danger of being submerged and swept out of existence, unless they constitute themselves into a separate State. I call that slogan scare-mongering pure and simple. It is nonsense to say that any people can permanently crush or swamp out of

existence one fourth of its population, which the Mussalmans are in India. But I would have no hesitation in conceding the demand of Pakistan if I could be convinced of its righteousness or that it is good for Islam. But I am firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forth by the Muslim League is un-Islamic and I have not hesitated to call it sinful. Islam stands for the unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family. Therefore, those who want to divide India into possibly warring groups are enemies alike of India and Islam. They may cut me to pieces but they cannot make me subscribe to something which I consider to be wrong.

The question of the Communists stands on a slightly different footing. They seem to have made trouble-shooting their profession. I have friends among them. Some of them are like sons to me. But it seems they do not make any distinction between fair and foul, truth and falsehood. They deny the charge. But their reported acts seem to sustain it. Moreover, they seem to take their instructions from Russia, whom they regard as their spiritual home rather than India. I cannot countenance this dependence on an outside power. I have even said that we should not depend even on Russian wheat in our present food crisis. We must have the ability and courage to subsist on what our soil can give us rather than depend on foreign charity. Otherwise, we shall not deserve to exist as an independent country. The same applies to foreign ideologies. I would accept them only to the extent that I can assimilate them and adapt them to the Indian scene. But I must refuse to go under them.

My formula for the Communists, therefore, is that I would prefer to die at their hands, but I will not retaliate.

New Delhi, 30-9-'46 PYARELAL

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**Example to Follow**

Shri Parikshitlal Majumdar, Secretary, Gujarat Branch of Harijan Sevak Sangh has opened since June last a hostel for college boys in the building of the Gujarat Vidyapith with 16 boys, out of whom 12 are Harijans — Vankars, Chamars, Garadas and Nadias, and 4 Savarna Hindus — Patidars, Patanwadias and Banias. They live and dine together on full equal terms having a common mess and common life. They study in different colleges in Ahmedabad — Arts, Science and Law. The Harijan boys are paid a stipend by the Government at Rs. 25 p. m. and the non-Harijan boys pay for their own boarding expenses. The Gujarat Sangh will have to pay for the house rent and sanitation charge and for the initial expenses and has provided Rs. 1,000 per annum for the same. This is an excellent example of the removal of untouchability by inter-dining and by having a common life. It is to be hoped that other provinces will follow suit and open many such hostels.

Delhi, 15-8-'46 A. V. THAKKAR

## 'GANDHI VICHAR DOHAN'

This book has become almost a standard work for those organizations and individuals who believe in the constructive programme and are desirous of understanding the essence of Gandhiji's thought. The original in Gujarati has been through four editions and translations of it in Hindustani and other Indian languages have also been printed more than once. One publishing house has asked my permission to do an English translation.

It is necessary to clarify some points in this regard. I have been unable since 1939-40 to look through again and amend the book. Gandhiji's thought has progressed much during the last six or seven years. It will, therefore, be necessary, in the light of this progress, to rewrite certain portions of the book. It may even be necessary to add some chapters.

In my opinion, there would even be a risk of misinterpreting Gandhiji's thought, if the *Vichar Dohan* were to be reprinted as it is. It will, therefore, be best to have neither a reprint nor a translation. I feel I ought to say something about an English translation of the book. At my request Rajkumari Amrit Kaur did translate the whole book and Gandhiji even read the beginning portions of it. Rajkumari is known to be able to write English well. Nevertheless Gandhiji was of opinion that a literal translation of the book in English would not be fitting and he suggested that it would be better if a free English rendering embodying all the essence of the book could be presented to the public. Such a rendering can only be done by Rajkumari or others like her who can express themselves in the English language. Those who wish to publish the book in English will realize that a mere translation will not satisfy Gandhiji.

The question as to who should re-edit the book now remains to be considered. I am afraid I may not be able to do the work. I requested my co-worker, Shri Narhari Parikh to do so. He has agreed but he also is full of work and his health is not good. If some one well versed in Gandhian thought would help him, only then would the task be finished well in time. It should be remembered that up till now the book has been perused by Gandhiji before publication. It is hoped that this may be done in future also. Therefore, it is not possible to say when the next edition can be brought out. It is enough for the time being to realize that no reprints or translations are possible before revision.

One thing more. It is absolutely necessary to get the permission of the Navajivan Karyalaya for publishing this book in any language.

Sevagram, 28-9-'46 K. G. MASHRUWALA

*(From the original in Hindustani)*

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HARIJAN

October 6 1946

## HAND-SPINNING v. MILL-SPINNING

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

Sometime before the Provincial Ministries throughout India were formed, I had heard that quotas of spindles were offered to the Provinces on pain — if a particular province did not take its quota — of the refused quota being transferred to the other Provinces. Now that the Provincial administrations are in full swing, the question has arisen as to whether these Governments can admit new mills and, at the same time, promote hand-spinning on a national scale. My answer is emphatically in the negative, if the encouragement of hand-spinning is meant to be sincere. Behind the India-wide quota is the fundamental belief that mills alone can and must supply India's needs for cloth and that hand-spun may be permitted to exist for the fastidious few. That was not how hand-spinning was conceived in Congress resolutions and that certainly is not the way that the A.I.S.A. has progressed. If the national Governments have come to the conclusion that hand-spinning has and should have no future, they should not waste a single rupee along the lines followed by the A. I. S. A. If, on the other hand, they share the belief of the A.I.S.A., they should forego their quota even if the foregoing should involve some initial loss. The loss will be demonstrably for the future gain of the masses.

Another question has arisen as to why the Working Committee should not, at any rate, declare a uniform policy to be followed by all the Congress Provinces. There is nothing to prevent the Committee from doing so. But it is open to them to say that the Congress policy has been enunciated times without number. Each Province has to measure its own belief in the Congress scales. The Working Committee might not go into details.

Then why may not the Central Government lay down a policy? The answer is obvious. The Central Government represents all India and all parties. It may not, therefore, lay down any exclusively Congress policy, much less a policy in a matter wholly within the jurisdiction of the Provinces. It would be an unwarranted interference with the rights of Provinces.

Looked at from all points of view, in the matter of Khadi as of prohibition and other subjects allotted to the Provinces, the Provinces must evolve along their own lines. They will miserably fail, if they look to the Working Committee to guide them. The Central Government simply has not the right, even if it had the unholy wish.

New Delhi, 30-9-'46

## THE RIGHTS OF HARIJANS

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

I have received letters from Harijan friends and some have been to see me too. Now that power has come into the nation's hands, they feel that there should be more than one Harijan minister. Their population ratio demands at least three. Moreover, they claim representation in every department on this basis. It would be wrong, they say, to hold that there are not enough able persons among them. They maintain that the rule of capability is by no means applied to non-Harijans. They can cite instances of nepotism.

I am not ready to admit the correctness of all they say. My mind works quite differently. Man is master as far as performance of his duty is concerned and I hold that his rights really spring from duties properly performed. Such rights alone are befitting as also lasting. If every non-Harijan who had ability was able to exercise his rights, society would be disrupted. Performance of duty was open to every one. The field of service is immense. Few can become masters and he fails who seeks t[o] become master. I know, however, that people do not act as I have suggested. Hence there is a general scramble for power. And many are turned away disappointed. Holding the views I do, I have tried to act on them for the last fifty years. I am uninterested in the unbecoming struggle for power. My sole advice to Harijans is that they should think only in terms of their duties and rights will follow as surely as day follows night.

New Delhi, 27-9-'46

(*From the original in Gujarati*)

## SCAVENGERS' LOT

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

*Q.* You have doubtless written on this subject before but I would like you to say a word again in regard to the duty of municipal and other authority as well as private employers in the matter of providing *Bhangis* with the proper means of scavenging. Unless water-tight iron pails are provided for example, the drippings during the rainy season, through baskets or gunny bags, fall on the unfortunate workers. All scavenging should really be able to be done without soiling the hands or any part of the body. If this were so, the work would assume a dignity which it does not carry at the moment. Along with the supply of proper means of scavenging, sweeping etc. the *Bhangi* needs instruction. It is a matter which local and provincial authority should take up in the cause of cleanliness.

*A.* I would advocate bye-laws requiring authorized receptacles, brooms, etc. which would avoid physical handling of dirt and would also prescribe simple working costume. Inspectors or overseers will be trained for this humane and sanitary work instead of being expected to exact work anyhow. The result of the present system is maximum of insanitation and minimum of work plus bribery, corruption and bad manners.

New Delhi, 30-9-'46

## HOW ?

*( By M. K. Gandhi )*

A correspondent writes :

> "You are aware of the backward States of the Simla Hills. The Raja Saheb of Rampur Bushahr is a man of orthodox views. Recently a young man of a high caste Hindu family married a *Koli* girl. The Lambardar of the village (Mandhol) brought the matter to the notice of the ruler. The Raja Saheb has sentenced both husband and wife to six months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 each. Such action is intolerable and retards progress. Some others who were contemplating inter-caste marriages have been deterred.
>
> "Must we wait till autocracy is wiped out ?"

The rule of one man over many is intolerable. It must end. "How" is the question. The way is for the many to begin to live. To cut off the head of one ruler is easy enough. Remember the legend of Ravana. He had ten heads. As soon as one was cut off, another popped up in its place. The moral is that no cutting off of heads becomes necessary in the presence of a living demos. The one will respond and submit. In the given instance the couple will cheerfully undergo the sentence. Only many should follow their example, if the tie is not lustful bondage but a bond of love born out of the zeal for reform. If the reformers do not wish to suffer imprisonment, they should migrate to a free place where they can live without let or hindrance.

New Delhi, 30-9-'46

## WEEKLY LETTER

### AN AMERICAN INTERLUDE

Of a more intimate and personal nature than the conversation with an English journalist which I recorded last week were the questions put to Gandhiji by an American journalist who saw Gandhiji at about the same time. The talk covered a wide range of subjects from Gandhiji's personal philosophy and his views on predestination to the future of Congress Ministers in the Interim Government and the prevention of third world war.

"Are you full of the joy of life ? Why do you want to live for 125 years ?" was the first question asked by this friend. He was surprised when Gandhiji told him that his desire to live up to 125 years was not for "enjoyment" but service. "Both are not the same," he explained and proceeded to expound to the puzzled interviewer the doctrine of "enjoyment through renunciation" as set forth in the *Ishopanishad.*

"When did your real enjoyment of life begin," asked the friend next.

"When I was born."

"No. I mean when did that pattern of life begin, when service became a joy for ever."

"When I understood the inner meaning of life."

"Is that India's speciality ?"

"The only speciality of India is her poverty as America's is her glamour of riches," replied Gandhiji.

"May not there be occasions when one may have to compromise ideals with expediency ?" next asked the friend.

"No, never. I do not believe that end justifies the means."

"Is it possible that your activities may some day be removed from the political field ?"

"Perhaps you do not know," replied Gandhiji, "that I felt compelled to come into the political field because I found that I could not do even social work without touching politics. I feel that political work must be looked upon in terms of social and moral progress. In democracy no part of life is untouched by politics. Under the British you cannot escape politics in the good sense. It embraces the whole life. All who breathe must pay a tax. That is British rule in India. Take the salt tax for instance. It concerns everybody. The collector of revenue and the policeman are the only symbols by which millions in India's villages know British rule. One cannot sit still while the people are being ravaged."

"Then your job will never be finished," remarked the friend.

"It will be finished only with my death. I must be watchful, whether it is the foreign government that is in power or indigenous, if I am a social reformer in the true sense of the term. This is applicable to all."

"When people attain power they grow away from the people. What about here?"

"Let us hope and pray that this will never happen here. I have likened our people's office-acceptance to wearing a crown of thorns and pretty sharp thorns at that."

### AN ASSORTMENT

The friend then passed on to a variety of subjects.

What did Gandhiji think of the students' strikes?

"It seems to be a universal malady, an epidemic," replied Gandhiji.

Did Gandhiji ever feel depressed ?

That word was not to be found in Gandhiji's dictionary. "I believe in an over-ruling power as I believe I am talking to you just now. This may be unreal, but that *is* real. It dominates me and enables me to remain calm even in the midst of storm."

Gandhiji's questioner next asked his opinion about predestination.

"It is a much-abused word," replied Gandhiji. "It is true that we are not quite as free as we imagine. Our past holds us. But like all other doctrines this may well be ridden to death."

This provoked the question as to how one could overcome the unpleasant effects of one's predestination since predestination was a reality. "By taking the pleasant with the unpleasant in perfect detachment and thereby sterilizing the unpleasant of its sting, even as you have tackled the problem of the prickly pear by removing its thorn through judicious selection and cultivation and converting it into edible fodder for cattle," replied Gandhiji.

"How to prevent the next war?" was the friend's last question.

"By doing the right thing," replied Gandhiji, "irrespective of what the world will do. Each individual must act according to his ability without

waiting for others if he wants to move them to act. There comes a time when an individual becomes irresistible and his action becomes all-pervasive in its effect. This comes when he reduces himself to zero."

"If the third war comes," added Gandhiji, "it will be the end of the world. The world cannot stand a third war. For me the second war has not stopped, it still goes on."

THE DARKENING SHADOW

Reports of killings and stabbings everywhere continued to darken the horizon during the week. "We are passing through trying times," observed Gandhiji in the course of one of his prayer addresses. "There is news of stabbings in Calcutta, Dacca, Allahabad, Bombay and so on. What is more, all this is done in the name of religion. How stabbing and murder of the innocents, whether aggressive or retaliatory, can help the cause of religion, I fail to understand. The spirit of religion requires us to make Him witness of our littlest of little acts. In Mira's song that has just been sung at the prayer, the devotee prays to God to come to his aid and deliver him from distress. For He alone can do so, none else. Let us pray to God then to deliver us from our distress. If our prayer is sincere, we will rely on Him entirely and put away the sword. And if even one party did so, violence would cease."

An esteemed Bengali friend, continued Gandhiji, had put him some questions as to how they should act at such times as Calcutta had recently been through. His reply was that the Hindus and Mussalmans should both cease to rely on the use of the knife and the stick for their protection and make suffering without retaliation their shield and they will be safe. Gandhiji said that he was daily receiving letters from friends to say that some relative or other had died. He wrote to all that they should not mourn nor should they expect him to mourn with them. "If we have a living faith in God, we will realize that it is the mortal body that perishes, never the immortal spirit within. Man is born to die. Death is the natural corollary to birth." So whether God sent them natural death or whether they were killed by the assassin's knife, they must go smiling to their end. There would not then be knives or sticks in evidence everywhere as they were today. Gandhiji, therefore, asked all to pray to God to vouchsafe to them the living faith that enables one to put oneself entirely under His protection without reliance on any outside help and to remember that He never fails His devotees.

HINDUSTAN BOY SCOUTS' ASSOCIATION

He reiterated his faith before the members of the Hindustan Scouts' Association, who with Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru their National Commissioner and Pandit Shri Ram Bajpai their National Organizing Commissioner, had a brief meeting with him after the evening prayer on the 29th of September. His last meeting with them was in 1940, when they held a rally at Sevagram. They told him that their present strength was nearly three lakhs. "Why are there stabbings and rioting in the country then?" Gandhiji asked, twitting them. It was up to them, he told them, to interpose a living wall of flesh between the infuriated groups and individuals and stop the bloodshed by shedding their own, if necessary.

WILL THEY DO IT?

Khadi, prohibition and the abolition of untouchability have for many years been part and parcel of the Congress programme. To carry them into effect requires not intelligence so much as faith and determination and utmost purity of purpose. It gave Gandhiji particular satisfaction to announce in the course of one of his evening prayer addresses that Shri T. Prakasam, the Premier of Madras, and his Ministry had undertaken to carry out big schemes in regard to all the three in the Madras Presidency. Before giving his final approval to the scheme about Khadi, Gandhiji had asked for an assurance that no more mills would be created. It appears that before the National Government had been set up at the Centre, the old Executive Council had allocated quotas of spindles to the various provinces. If a province failed to utilize its quota, they were informed, it would be apportioned to other provinces that might apply for it. In fact there was quite a scramble for obtaining licences. But Gandhiji warned the Congress Ministries that their Khadi schemes would be a sham and an eyewash if at the same time they went on planting fresh textile mills in their respective provinces. If they invested crores of rupees in setting up new textile mills the latter would naturally be the first charge on their attention and the public would refuse to take their schemes about Khadi seriously.

Congress leaders have to be true to their word and pure of heart. They may not be tempted by crores. They must be willing to go smiling to the gallows, if need be, for the sake of principles. Textile mills had been started everywhere even before the last war. The Provinces were being asked to start new ones. The machinery for them would be costly but the money that was supposed to follow in their wake was the lure. Gandhiji explained how he thought textile mills were as poison for village India and therefore to be avoided. People might wonder how he lived as a guest of a millowner — but these millowners had, in spite of his views, taken him in as one of their family, and non-violence demanded tolerance and love for all even if they differed from one. Shri Prakasam had promised Gandhiji that he would not be tempted with new textile mills for Madras and he would even hope to eliminate the existing ones as soon as the Khadi spirit prevailed.

At the same prayer gathering Gandhiji spoke about the food situation owing to the unexpected failure of arrangements for the import of food grains from abroad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad had the heart of gold. He would share his last crust of bread with the poor. The moment he heard a cry of distress from the South he got rice from wherever he could in India and promised them supplies. Gandhiji asked

Shri Prakasam how his province could ever starve. He knew well the people of South India. His first introduction to the latter was in South Africa through a poor indentured labourer Balasundaram whose case he had sponsored. During the historic march into the Transvaal they only got a pound and a quarter of bread and an ounce of sugar and during the resistance march he heard them singing and cooking edible shrubs picked up from the grass around them. Theirs was a land which produced the banana, the cocoanut, the yam, the tamarind and chillies. What more did they want? They, with their intelligence and resourcefulness, could easily learn to do without rice, if they were asked to do so. Gandhiji had asked Shri Prakasam not to worry Shri Rajen Babu and he had promised he would not. It behoved everyone today, wherever they were, to be self-reliant and resourceful, brave and willing with intelligence and determination to face the food crisis. If all joined forces it would be well with India.

### A Test of Faith

Wherever Gandhiji goes, he has the knack of surrounding himself by an atmosphere of spinning and Khadi. In response to eager and persistent demand, Kanu Gandhi has opened another spinning class for one week as from the 30th September. This time, thanks to the experience of the previous venture, the teachers are better prepared and all implements for teaching too are available. The entrance fee as before is Re. 1 with an additional rupee as safe deposit to insure continuity and steadiness of attendance.

It was intended not to admit more than 30 persons at a time to the classes. But 38 came on the very first morning and 34 in the afternoon. There were 21 men and 17 women in the morning and 14 and 20 respectively in the afternoon. "This shows," remarked Gandhiji in the course of his Monday written message, "that there is enough faith and enthusiasm in a certain part of the public. Is the fault then of the teachers or that of the times that spinning has not become universal? To put the blame on the times in which we live is a mark of defeatism. Faith and diligence should rise above circumstances. If all work were to be carried out on this basis and in this spirit, God would surely reward our labours."

### Some Highlights

It was a privilege during the week to be visited by Shri Nandlal Bose and Shri Gurudayal Mullick from Shantiniketan. The latter treated the prayer gathering to soulful singing of one of his favourite Sindhi songs. A free rendering of it is given below:

"Thy house is very beautiful. Thou art omnipresent.
"If I look at the starlit sky Thou art there.
"Thou art the moon in the firmament.
"The market place is full of human beings.
"Thou art the life within them.
"Thou art in the idols of the temples. Man perceives Thee even in stones.
"Thou art in the surging waves of the ocean.
"Thou art the pilot of the ship's pilot.
"Seeing Thee everywhere man worships Thee.
"And in worshipping Thee all wants are fulfilled."

There was also, during the week, a meeting with the presidents and secretaries of the various Provincial Congress Committees when Gandhiji answered some important questions that were put to him. The more important of these questions with Gandhiji's answers will be found given elsewhere in this issue.

I must not here omit to take note of the spate of visitors to foreign countries at the various conferences that has occurred of late. Some of them have even been asking for Gandhiji's blessings. I cannot do better than reproduce the reply sent by Gandhiji to one of them:

> "I dislike this craze for the West. What this army of men and women will bring I shall watch. Only do not seek my blessings for what I dislike. My opinion you know."

New Delhi, 1-10-'46 PYARELAL

## A GOOD WAY

The following is the gist of a correspondent's letter from Dalhousie:

> "I want to bring to your notice a recent happening in a village in Chamba State because I do not think any magistrate has ever acted in this way before. A certain number of *goondas* got drunk one day. They looted shops, beat some people and threatened to burn the shops when remonstrated with. The shopkeepers got frightened and closed their shops and asked for protection from State authority. A special magistrate was sent to the village to round up the culprits. He instructed the police to take every precaution to see that only the actual miscreants were caught and no innocent persons involved. The shopkeepers refused to open their shops until the *goondas* were arrested thus causing great inconvenience to the village folk and this they did in spite of assurances from the magistrate that their property would be properly protected. All persuasion having failed the magistrate, instead of resorting to the law and forcibly having the shops opened, undertook to fast for the sake of the villagers. This action had a magical effect. All the shops opened on the next day, the culprits were rounded up and calm prevailed."

New Delhi, 27-9-'46 A. K.

[If this story is true, it just shows what a mighty weapon fasting can be in the armoury of the official class. — M. K. G.]

(*From the original in Hindustani*)

### FOR AGENTS

Agents are requested to take note of the following:

1. Please remember that agents have to deposit with us an amount covering the price of their demand *for two months*. A month's deposit will be treated as fixed and the other as current. Every week the cost of the copies sent to them would be deducted from the current deposit.

2. The amounts for the deposits are usually sent by the agents by cheques. Please note that we do not accept cheques. The amount should be remitted either by M. O., Postal Order or by a bank draft.

MANAGER

# Notes

### Co-operatives in Kerala

Sjt. Kelappan came to see me two days ago and informed me that co-operative movement was going strong and had become very popular in Kerala. If the societies are sound, it was heartening news that Sjt. Kelappan gave me. I, however, expressed my serious doubts. The secret of successful co-operative effort is that the members must be honest and know the great merit of co-operation and it must have a definite progressive goal. Thus holding a certain sum of money in co-operation for the sake of making more money by charging exhorbitant rates of interest is a bad goal. But co-operative farming or dairying is undoubtedly a good goal promoting national interests. Such instances can be multiplied. I wonder what these numerous Kerala societies are. Have they honest inspectors who know their work? It may be mentioned that such movements have often proved disastrous when management has been dishonest and the goal questionable.

New Delhi, 29-9-'46

### Guruvayur

Who does not know this historic struggle? Sjt. Kelappan had threatened to fast for the opening of this temple to Harijans. He suspended it on my strong advice and assurance that I would fight for it. Then followed a successfully carried out referendum which resulted in an overwhelming vote of caste Hindus in favour of the opening. But the Zamorin protested helplessness. Later, I went to Guruvayur and a great public meeting signified its decided opinion in favour. I had the pleasure too of meeting the Zamorin who courteously reiterated his helplessness. Other Kerala temples have been opened. Travancore has set a brilliant example by its great State proclamation. The Meenakshi and Palni temples are open. Why should Guruvayur yet remain closed? Surely no Satyagraha should now be necessary? It is up to the Provincial National Government to see that the opinion of the great bulk of the temple-going public is not defeated by legal technicalities. It is a thousand pities that even at this time of the day there are temples in India which shut out Hindus, miscalled Untouchables.

New Delhi, 29-9-'46

### A Deed of Mercy

A Pathan, an ex-I. N. A. man, now employed by a firm, tried to defend a lad of 10 years. His entreaty was in vain. The assailants stabbed both the boy and the Pathan. The boy died. The Pathan lives. The deceased boy's father offered Rs. 4,000 as a reward for his bravery. He refused saying he tried to do his duty and would not take the reward offered. Would that such instances were multiplied!

New Delhi, 28-9-'46 M. K. G.

## RIDING TWO HORSES

(*By M. K. Gandhi*)

There are a fair number of members of the *Tanti* caste in Utkal. Legally they are looked upon as Harijans. They are well known as *Pan-Tantis*. Many of them have gone to Kolhan in Singbhum District for earning a livelihood. They do not look upon themselves as Harijans with the result that they are not included among the Harijans of Bihar. They do not get themselves enlisted in Government records as Harijans. It is right that they do not. Why should there be any desire to be classed as Harijans? What benefit can accrue therefrom except that they would get the right of voting as also some help from the Government and the Harijan Sevak Sangh in the matter of education etc.? Is it proper to be classed Untouchables for selfish ends? The very idea should sicken one. One may not stoop so low even for the sake of a livelihood.

A *Tanti* need not be a *Pan-Tanti*. Today we have popular governments whose duty it is to help all backward classes in the matter of education etc. as they do in the case of Harijans.

It was the British Government that created a separate class called Scheduled Castes. In the eyes of popular governments there can be no distinction between rich and poor, literate or illiterate, high or low. All are one and there can be no distinctions on the score of religion either. All are Indians.

The *Tantis* should not try to count themselves as Harijans, they should not hanker after Government service. Whatever is possible for the crores must also be possible for the *Tantis* and all others. My advice to the *Tantis* of Kolhan is that they should reform and raise themselves by means of honest work and the more fortunate should help them to do so.

New Delhi, 28-9-'46

(*From the original in Hindustani*)

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